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REV. E. M. STONE'S

Address

AT THE

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION,

DANVERS, MASS.,

JUNE 16, 1852.



BOSTON:

PRINTED BY DUTTON AND WENTWORTH,

No. 37, CONGRESS STREET.

1852.

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THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES, AS OBSERVED IN THE CITY OF BOSTON, MASS., ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1876.

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ADDRESS.

THE PRESIDENT having proposed the honored name of NATHAN DANE, as a sentiment, it was responded to by the Rev. E. M. STONE, of Providence, as follows:—

I thank you, Mr. President, for the very kind manner in which you have been pleased to connect my name with Beverly,—a town in which I spent many pleasant years, and from whose citizens, as I gratefully remember, I have received many tokens of confidence and favor.

A thought naturally suggested by the interesting scenes of this day, is the influence of towns on the character and destiny of a nation. Towns act through individuals. They have their representative men through whom they speak, and by whom they illustrate the principles they hold dear. Of this class was Hon. Nathan Dane,—a name around which clusters all we venerate in man as a Christian, a Jurist, and a Statesman. On the 27th of December next, one hundred years will have elapsed since he first drew breath in Ipswich, and full seventy years have gone by since he established himself in the profession of law in Beverly. His long and honorable career is well known to the citizens of this town. It is marked by many acts of public usefulness and private munificence. Of his public acts, the most important are those to which your sentiment refers. By the first, the Federal constitution was rendered “adequate to the exigencies of government and preservation of the union.” By the second, freedom from involuntary servitude was secured to four hundred thousand square miles of territory, and the interminable West saved from a blighting evil that has so sadly marred the prosperity of other sections of our great and glorious confederacy. The ordinance of 1787 evinced a far seeing wisdom. It marked an epoch in our history, from which freedom dates momentous results. It struck a chord of humanity and civil rights, that will not cease to vibrate until the last link of oppression’s chain is broken. It has drawn from the most gifted minds in our land the strongest expressions of admiration. “I doubt,” said Mr. Webster, on one of the most intensely interesting occasions of his public life, “whether one single law of any law-giver, ancient or modern, has produced effects of a more distinct and marked and lasting character than the ordinance of ’87,—and certainly it has happened to few men, to be the authors of a political measure of more large and enduring consequence. It fixed, forever, the character of the population in the vast regions northwest of the Ohio, by excluding from them involuntary servitude. It impressed on the soil itself, while it was yet a wilderness,

an incapacity to bear up any other than freemen. It laid the interdict against personal servitude, in original compact, not only deeper than all local law, but deeper, also, than all local constitutions. Under the circumstances then existing, I look upon this original and seasonable provision as a real good attained. We see its consequences at this moment, and we shall never cease to see them, perhaps, while the Ohio shall flow."

In the labors thus eulogized, Mr. Dane represented the sentiment, or rather, I may say, the principles of the town of Beverly,—principles by which her citizens were actuated during the revolutionary struggle, and which are recorded on almost every page of her revolutionary transactions.

It was the good fortune of Mr. Dane, while the ordinance of 1787 was under consideration, to be seconded in his efforts by men imbued with the same spirit; and there comes to my mind, in this connection, the name of one whose important services to the political, social, intellectual, and religious interests of the great West, are yet to be made known. I refer to the late Rev. Manasseh Cutler, LL.D., of Hamilton, the earnest and judicious coadjutor of Mr. Dane, (though not then a member of Congress,) in securing the passage of the ordinance, and to whom, in his own person, and through his honored son, Judge Ephraim Cutler, Ohio is more indebted than to any other man, for those distinguishing traits which give her a proud preëminence among her western sisters. Sir, the influence of Beverly and Hamilton, through these their representative men, upon the public opinion and present position of our nation, can scarcely be over-estimated, and the debt of gratitude due to them will be as enduring as the institutions of our country. Of Mr. Dane, it is sufficient to add that his highest eulogy is found in the works with which his name is identified, and it is glory enough for Beverly that for more than half a century she could number him among her most distinguished citizens. The period embraced in the anniversary of this day, Mr. President, covers the most important acts in the history of our country,—its resistance of oppression, its struggle for civil freedom, and its triumphant achievement of a name among the nations of the earth. In the stirring events that led on to these results, Danvers took a decided and active part. In the field and in the public councils she had representative men worthy the trust reposed in them, and worthy a place on the roll inscribed with the name of Nathan Dane. Her Fosters and Pages, her Hutchinsons, Putnams and Proctors, and their associates, were men of mark,—men upon whom the lesson at North Bridge had not been lost, and who, at Lexington, Bunker Hill, Monmouth, and other points distinguished for heroic deeds, did good service for their country, and won for themselves an imperishable fame.

Another of her representative men was Judge Samuel Holten, a compeer of Mr. Dane, and a patriot of the Washington school. In the dark hours of his country's peril, in the provincial, and subsequently in the national councils, he proved himself equal to the weighty responsibilities imposed upon him, and by his position and influence contributed much to the glorious consummation in which twenty-three millions of freemen this day rejoice. To show the spirit of the man, and the

ready sacrifice he made of pecuniary interest and health for the sacred cause of freedom, I will present a few extracts from letters written while in Congress to a member of the General Court of Massachusetts.

Under date, Philadelphia, March 30, 1779, he says, after speaking of the alarming state of the public finances, "you are pleased to ask me when I think of coming home. In answer, permit me to observe, that when I had the honor of being elected to a seat in Congress, I was sensible my friends had overrated my abilities, yet I was determined to give place to no man in my endeavors to serve my distressed country, and having given my constant attendance in Congress, not having been absent one day since I took my seat, (excepting three days I was confined by sickness,) I now find myself so much engaged, and the distresses of my country so great, that I have no thought of returning till some of my colleagues arrive to take my place, for if the State is not as fully represented as they expect, it shall not be my fault, *though it may be very destructive to my health.*"

Again, June 8, he writes upon the same subject: "It is vain for us to expect that we can carry on the war by emitting bills. We must now all part with a part of our bills or other estate to procure them for public use. You may be assured, my worthy colleagues as well as myself, have been and still are exerting ourselves in this great affair of finance. I am sure you will agree with me in sentiment, *that we had much better pay a tenth of our estates, than lose all that is worth living in this world to enjoy.*"

Again, under date of November 8, on the same theme, he writes, "Our all seems to be at stake, and I fear the good people are not sensible of it.*****Your greatest concern appears to be about a new army. My greatest concern is how we shall support the army, &c., &c. But don't suppose I despair of the common cause. No, it is too good and just to despair of. It is the dangers I foresee that makes me press this important matter. I put great dependence, under God, upon the knowledge and virtue of the New England States, and I think I shall not be disappointed."

Once more, writing under date of April 21, 1780, he says, "My engagements are such that I can write you but a few lines upon our public affairs, which are truly distressing. The depreciation of our currency has not only deranged and embarrassed the public affairs, but almost put a total stop to all the movements of our armies. Is the Honorable Assembly really sensible of our situation and their own danger? I fear not. Men, money and provisions are what are so much needed, but the two last give me the greatest concern, for without them it will be impossible for the army to keep together. I can truly say I have met nothing like it since the war. *But don't, my worthy friend, think I despair of the common cause;* no, not if the army disbands, which some think will be the case. My fears are that we shall be reduced to still greater difficulties before the good people will be fully sensible of their danger, and exert themselves accordingly."

One other extract must suffice. Under date of Philadelphia, May 2, 1780, he writes, "As it is not my intention ever to return to Congress, I shall have only to take leave of you, and my other worthy friends at Court, and retire to private life. My constant attendance in Congress,

for almost two years, must render it a great relief to my mind to retire, and my friends here inform me they think that unless I lay aside business that requires so close attention, I shall end my days in this city; *but the distressed state of our country has a sensible effect upon a mind like mine, and whatever state I am in, I shall continue to exert myself in the common cause as long as my health will admit, or till our country is restored to peace.*"

Such, sir, was the "upright Judge," whom his fellow-citizens so often delighted to honor, whose wise counsels, while a member of Congress, gave frequent direction to the action of your state legislature, and of whom it has been truly said, "his name will be handed down to posterity with the celebrated names of his cotemporary patriots, crowned with immortal honors."

Danvers, Mr. President, has never been deficient in representative men, through whom a potential influence in forming the character and shaping the destiny of the nation could be exerted. Among these, high on the record of the departed, is inscribed the name of one to whom affecting tributes have just been paid by his Excellency and the gentleman from Middlesex, (Hon. Mr. Palfrey,) and whom it was my happiness to number among my personal friends. Sir, the Hon. Daniel P. King, the noble successor of the noble Saltonstall, was eminently deserving the confidence reposed in him. Faithfully did he watch over the interests of his constituents, and honorably did he represent their principles in the state and national legislatures. Everywhere he left the impress of "an honest, independent freeman," asking only in all his public acts, "is the measure right?" not, "will it be popular?" His early and lamented death cast a deep shadow upon thousands of hearts, and while memory is true to its office, his public life and private virtues will be held in affectionate recollection.

Honorable is it, sir, to this town, that humanity, temperance, education, and religion which crowns them all, have never failed to find here able champions, faithful expounders and generous benefactors. On all these prominent features of state and national character, Danvers, through her representative men, has left her mark. Her century of history is a history of progress in virtue, intelligence and social refinement. Her patriotism is as true now, as when the drum beat to arms on the morning of the 19th April, 1775. Her past is the pledge of her future; and while the spirit of her departed patriots is cherished, every good cause, every interest vital to the prosperity and perpetuity of our Union, will receive generous and efficient support.

Of the events of this occasion, Mr. President, none will be longer remembered, or will shed richer blessings on the future generations of this town, than that which has this moment surprised and delighted us, and which has been so happily referred to by Judge White. The munificent donation you have announced from your former townsman, for the promotion of "knowledge and morality" among you, is an eulogy upon "the unrivalled New England institution of the common school," and upon his discriminating judgment, to which nothing need be added. It is indeed a "noble benefaction"—the noble deed of one, who, amidst the deserved commercial successes and honors of a foreign land, still remembers that he is an American, and who,

turning with fond recollection to the scenes of childhood's home, strengthens, with manly hand and generous heart, the ties that have ever bound him to "fatherland." To say that this act is alike honorable to him and to his native town, is only to repeat a self-evident truth, which this audience have already shown they appreciate. Sir, I would not have failed to witness the breaking of that seal, or to hear those enthusiastic cheers, for all the other rich enjoyments of the day, and that is saying a great deal. It is a magnificent finale to these appropriate festivities; and to the end of time, the name of George Peabody will be enrolled with those "merchant princes" of America who are showing to the world, that they understand the true uses of wealth.

Pardon me, Mr. President, if, before I sit down, I utter a word or two in a somewhat different vein. My friend, the mayor of Salem, has very properly denominated this a family meeting, in which matters purely domestic may with propriety be talked over. It is true, I cannot claim, strictly, to be a member of the family; but that is more my misfortune than my fault. Beverly and Danvers, however, are "loving" daughters of "old mother Salem," and I think I might, by a liberal interpretation of the genealogical tables, prove myself a "distant relative." At all events, I shall plead the privilege of an old neighbor and friend, and "say my say."

I am not ignorant, sir, of the fact, that grave charges have been preferred against the good name of this ancient town. I am tolerably familiar with the traditions of old "Salem village," the "Devil's Dishfull," and "Blind Hole." I recollect that a certain "Lawrence Conant" once played off his jokes on us sober and confiding antiquarians, and that a gentleman, whose name I need not mention, has amused himself, and disturbed the cachinnary nerves of this whole community, by sinking railroads! Now, sir, I am not going to reproach you for these things. Not at all. The spirits of 1692, like those of 1852, had their way of doing things, and men of the present, like men of the past, enjoy fun after their own fashion; and who shall say the former deserved the fate of "goodwife Nurse," until their "manifestations" are satisfactorily explained, or that the latter should be sternly frowned upon until the maxim, "laugh and grow fat," is repudiated? But on family vagaries one hundred and sixty years ago, I shall not dwell. The more recent occurrences to which I have referred, I am disposed to look upon as the poetry of your local history,—embellishments springing, perhaps, from an "excess of activity," as a professor of theology once explained certain youthful propensities, and which a broad charity can readily excuse.

Besides, sir, a volume of good things may be said of your town, that will not require smoking, like the sermons of which you have spoken, to ensure their preservation for the use of a future historian. Of the representatives of agriculture in this Commonwealth, who stands a Saul among them but your orator? Of ploughs, what maker has produced a better than the "Eagle" of your townsman? Of defenders of the much-abused swine against Hebrew and Mahomedan aspersions, who has been more eloquent and effective than one of your fellow-citizens? What fields exhale a fragrance that may well

excite the envy of Weathersfield, or draw tears from sensitive eyes, like your own? Who but a Danvers antiquarian, could have recovered the original manuscript of Giles Corey's veritable "Dream," to which we have just listened with so much benefit to our digestion? What other town could have presented so strong attractions to "the greatest schoolmaster in New England," or can hope ever to eclipse the brilliant pageant of this day? Here, your Fowlers are in amity with the feathered tribes, your Kings are all first rate republicans, your Pooles are sparkling and refreshing as when two hundred years ago John Endicott slaked his thirst from the bubbling fountains of this vicinity, and your Popes are more desirous of supplying "the trade" with prime shoes, manufactured from good Danvers leather, than ambitious to wear the triple crown, or to rule the public conscience.

Now, if there are any within the sound of my voice, who are still inclined to dwell in a querulous spirit on the past, I will remind them that this is not the spirit of the hour, and my advice is, that they consign both the spirit and its exciting cause to the Waters of oblivion. As for myself, with these facts and this day's scenes before me, I am ready to join my friend from Salem in a proper resentment of any charge against you that an "outsider," knowing less of your history, shall hereafter bring. And with this avowal, I close by submitting the following sentiment:

The Town of Danvers—The scion of a noble stock. In patriotic love of country, unsurpassed. In works of humanity and social improvement, always right. In enterprise, honorable and indefatigable.